

**CLAIMS:**

What is claimed is:

1. A method for automatically downloading and installing software to a computer system, comprising the steps of:

- 5           receiving an instruction to install an item of software on the computer system;
- collecting data about the computer system to form collected data;
- based on the collected data, downloading a proper version of the item of software from a server;
- installing the proper version; and
- 10           based on the collected data, setting configuration options associated with the proper version.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the additional step of:

- based on the collected data, determining whether the item of software can be installed on the computer system, and if the item of software cannot, then ending
- 15           execution of the method.

3. The method of claim 1, further comprising the additional steps of:

submitting the collected data to a server; and

receiving an analysis of the collected data, wherein the analysis specifies the proper version and the configuration options.

5 4. The method of claim 1, further comprising the additional step of:

analyzing the collected data to determine the proper version and the configuration options.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising the additional step of:

returning a confirmatory message.

10 6. The method of claim 1, wherein the receiving step includes a step of receiving the instruction via one of a wireless network, a local area network, an Internet, an intranet, and a wide area network.

7. A method for automatically installing software on at least one computer system connected to a network, comprising the steps of:

15 receiving an instruction from a user input to install an item of software on the at least one computer system;

directing at least one software installation agent executing on the at least one computer system to download, install, and configure the item of software on the at least one computer system.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the method is executed on a server.

5 9. The method of claim 7, further comprising the additional step of:

receiving at least one confirmatory message from the at least one software installation agent.

10. The method of claim 7, wherein the receiving step includes a step of receiving the instruction from a remote computing device via the network.

10 11. The method of claim 10, wherein the receiving step includes a step of receiving the instruction through a HyperText Markup Language (HTML) interface.

12. The method of claim 7, wherein the network includes at least one of a wireless network, a local area network, an Internet, an intranet, and a wide area network.

13. The method of claim 7, further comprising the additional step of:

15 based on the user input, choosing the at least one computer system from a stored inventory of computer systems.

14. The method of claim 7, further comprising the additional step of:

transmitting the at least one software installation agent to the at least one computer system to be installed by a user.

15. A computer program product, in a computer-readable medium, for automatically  
5 downloading and installing software to a computer system, comprising instructions for:

receiving an instruction to install an item of software on the computer system;

collecting data about the computer system to form collected data;

based on the collected data, downloading a proper version of the item of software from a server;

10 installing the proper version; and

based on the collected data, setting configuration options associated with the proper version.

16. The computer program product of claim 15, further comprising additional instructions for:

15 based on the collected data, determining whether the item of software can be installed on the computer system, and if the item of software cannot, then ending execution of the method.

17. The computer program product of claim 15, further comprising additional instructions for:

submitting the collected data to a server; and

5 receiving an analysis of the collected data, wherein the analysis specifies the proper version and the configuration options.

18. The computer program product of claim 15, further comprising additional instructions for:

analyzing the collected data to determine the proper version and the configuration options.

10 19. The computer program product of claim 15, further comprising additional instructions for:

returning a confirmatory message.

20. The computer program product of claim 15, wherein the instructions for receiving include instructions for receiving the instruction via one of a wireless network, a local  
15 area network, an Internet, an intranet, and a wide area network.

21. A computer program product, in a computer-readable medium, for automatically installing software on at least one computer system connected to a network, comprising instructions for:

receiving an instruction from a user input to install an item of software on the at least one computer system;

directing at least one software installation agent executing on the at least one computer system to download, install, and configure the item of software on the at least one computer system.

22. The computer program product of claim 21, wherein the computer program product is executed on a server.

23. The computer program product of claim 21, further comprising additional instructions for:

receiving at least one confirmatory message from the at least one software installation agent.

24. The computer program product of claim 21, wherein the instructions for receiving include instructions for receiving the instruction from a remote computing device via the network.

25. The computer program product of claim 24, wherein the instructions for receiving include instructions for receiving the instruction through a HyperText Markup Language (HTML) interface.

26. The computer program product of claim 21, wherein the network includes at least one of a wireless network, a local area network, an Internet, an intranet, and a wide area network.

27. The computer program product of claim 21, further comprising additional instructions  
5 for:

based on the user input, choosing the at least one computer system from a stored inventory of computer systems.

28. The computer program product of claim 21, further comprising additional instructions  
for:

10 transmitting the at least one software installation agent to the at least one computer system to be installed by a user.

29. A system for for automatically installing software, comprising:

a network;

a server connected to the network;

15 a client computer connected to the network; and

at least one target computer connected to the network, wherein each of the at least one target computer executes a software installation agent,

wherein the client computer submits a request to the server, responsive to receiving the request the server schedules an appropriate time to install an item of software, at the appropriate time the server notifies the software installation agent on each of the at least one target computer that the item of software is to be installed, the software agent on each of the at least one target computer collects data about the at least one target computer to make a determination if and how the item of software can be installed and configured, based on the determination the software installation agent on each of the at least one target computer downloads, installs, and configures the item of software on each of the at least one target computer.

30. The system of claim 29, wherein the network includes at least one of a wireless network, a local area network, an Internet, an intranet, and a wide area network.

31. The system of claim 29, wherein the determination is made by the server.

32. The system of claim 29, wherein the determination is made by the software installation agent.

33. The system of claim 29, wherein the client computer submits the request using a HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP).

34. An apparatus for automatically downloading and installing software to a computer system, comprising means for:

receiving an instruction to install an item of software on the computer system;



collecting data about the computer system to form collected data;

based on the collected data, downloading a proper version of the item of software from a server;

installing the proper version; and

5 based on the collected data, setting configuration options associated with the proper version.

35. The apparatus of claim 34, further comprising additional means for:

based on the collected data, determining whether the item of software can be installed on the computer system, and if the item of software cannot, then ending an operation of the apparatus.

36. The apparatus of claim 34, further comprising additional means for:

submitting the collected data to a server; and

receiving an analysis of the collected data, wherein the analysis specifies the proper version and the configuration options.

37. The apparatus of claim 34, further comprising additional means for:

analyzing the collected data to determine the proper version and the configuration options.

38. The apparatus of claim 34, further comprising additional means for:

5        returning a confirmatory message.

39. The apparatus of claim 34, wherein the instruction is received through one of a wireless network, a local area network, an Internet, an intranet, and a wide area network.

40. An apparatus for automatically installing software on at least one computer system connected to a network, comprising means for:

10        receiving an instruction from a user input to install an item of software on the at least one computer system;

directing at least one software installation agent executing on the at least one computer system to download, install, and configure the item of software on the at least one computer system.

15        41. The apparatus of claim 40, wherein the apparatus includes a server.

42. The apparatus of claim 40, further comprising additional means for:

receiving at least one confirmatory message from the at least one software installation agent.

43. The apparatus of claim 40, wherein the instruction is received from a remote  
5 computing device via the network.

44. The apparatus of claim 43, wherein the instruction is received through a HyperText Markup Language (HTML) interface.

45. The apparatus of claim 40, wherein the network includes at least one of a wireless network, a local area network, an Internet, an intranet, and a wide area network.

10 46. The apparatus of claim 40, wherein the user input chooses the at least one computer system from a stored inventory of computer systems.

47. The apparatus of claim 40, further comprising additional means for:

transmitting the at least one software installation agent to the at least one computer system to be installed by a user.

15 48. A data processing system comprising:

a bus system;

a communication unit connected to the bus system;

a memory connected to the bus system, wherein the memory includes a set of instructions; and

a processing unit, wherein the processing unit includes at least one processor,

5 wherein the processing unit executes the set of instructions to perform the acts of:

receiving an instruction to install an item of software on the data processing system;

collecting data about the data processing system to form collected data;

10 based on the collected data, downloading a proper version of the item of software from a server;

installing the proper version; and

based on the collected data, setting configuration options associated with the proper version.

15 49. The data processing system of claim 48, wherein the processing unit executes the set of instructions to perform the additional acts of:

based on the collected data, determining whether the item of software can be

installed on the data processing system, and if the item of software cannot, then ending execution of the set of instructions.

50. The data processing system of claim 48, wherein the processing unit executes the set of instructions to perform the additional acts of:

5 submitting the collected data to a server; and

receiving an analysis of the collected data, wherein the analysis specifies the proper version and the configuration options.

51. The data processing system of claim 48, wherein the processing unit executes the set of instructions to perform the additional acts of:

10 analyzing the collected data to determine the proper version and the configuration options.

52. The data processing system of claim 48, wherein the processing unit executes the set of instructions to perform the additional acts of:

returning a confirmatory message.

15 53. The data processing system of claim 48, wherein the instruction is received through one of a wireless network, a local area network, an Internet, an intranet, and a wide area network.

54. A data processing system comprising:

a bus system;

a communication unit connected to the bus system;

a memory connected to the bus system, wherein the memory a set of instructions;

5 and

a processing unit, wherein the processing unit includes at least one processor,

wherein the processing unit executes the set of instructions to perform the acts of:

receiving an instruction from a user input to install an item of software on the at least one data processing system;

10 directing at least one software installation agent executing on the at least one data processing system to download, install, and configure the item of software on the at least one data processing system.

55. The data processing system of claim 54, wherein the data processing system is a server.

15 56. The data processing system of claim 54, wherein the processing unit executes the set of instructions to perform the acts of:

receiving at least one confirmatory message from the at least one software installation agent.

57. The data processing system of claim 54, wherein the instruction is received from a remote computing device via the network.

5 58. The data processing system of claim 57, wherein the instruction is received through a HyperText Markup Language (HTML) interface.

59. The data processing system of claim 54, wherein the network includes at least one of a wireless network, a local area network, an Internet, an intranet, and a wide area network.

10 60. The data processing system of claim 54, wherein the user input chooses the at least one data processing system from a stored inventory of data processing systems.

61. The data processing system of claim 54, wherein the processing unit executes the set of instructions to perform the acts of:

15 transmitting the at least one software installation agent to the at least one data processing system to be installed by a user.